

Medicare faces many problems these days. Costs are going up and coverage is declining. The federal bureaucracy that establishes pricing for medical procedures can't keep up with all the new practices being developed. Further, all of the so-called entitlement programs (Medicare, Social Security, Medi... Medicare faces many problems these days. Costs are going up and coverage is declining. The federal bureaucracy that establishes pricing for medical procedures can't keep up with all the new practices being developed. Further, all of the so-called entitlement programs (Medicare, Social Security, Medicaid, etc.) are growing so fast they are projected to consume the entire federal budget by 2037.

However, the new prescription drug program in Medicare is a ray of hope. Beneficiaries have a choice between hundreds of plans, so they can pick the one that best meets their needs for the lowest cost. As a result, more than 80% of seniors enrolled in the program report that they are happy with it. In its first year, it cost 40% less than originally projected, and it is expected to enjoy more savings this year. This means both beneficiaries and taxpayers are seeing real savings because of the market principals included in it.

I would like a choice, rather than being told what I must take. Nothing holds costs down and service up like a competitive marketplace. Allowing governments, including this government, to set prices and the level of service, is a prescription for higher prices and bad service.

I think that H.R. 4 is the opposite direction of where we should be going with health care. Rather than involving government more, we should engage competition and protect patient choice. In Congress, both political parties are pulling in opposite directions on this issue. The new Health Savings Accounts have created an option that puts more health care choices in the hands of patients and makes health coverage available to more Americans. The president's proposal of a standard deduction for taxpayers on health coverage will make health coverage more accessible and will open up more opportunities for workers to make choices about their plans.

Milton Friedman wrote that "the market gives people what the people want, instead of what other people think they ought to want. At the bottom of many criticisms of the market economy is really lack of belief in freedom itself."

When we invest in a culture of freedom we will see choice in health care, innovation in science

and energy, competition between schools, and expanded security for our retirement savings. Or, we can live in a culture of government that ignores efficiency, opportunity and choice.